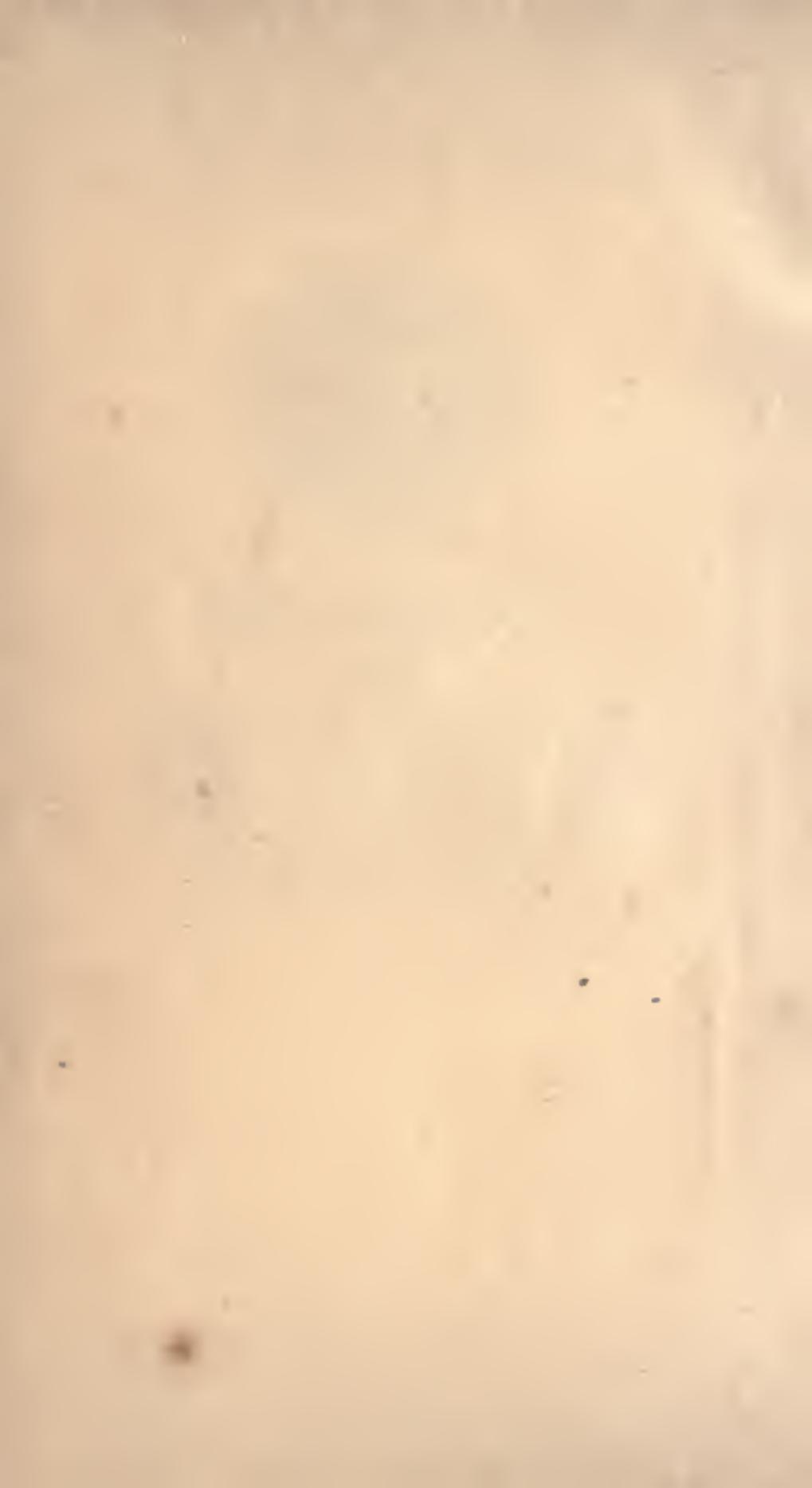


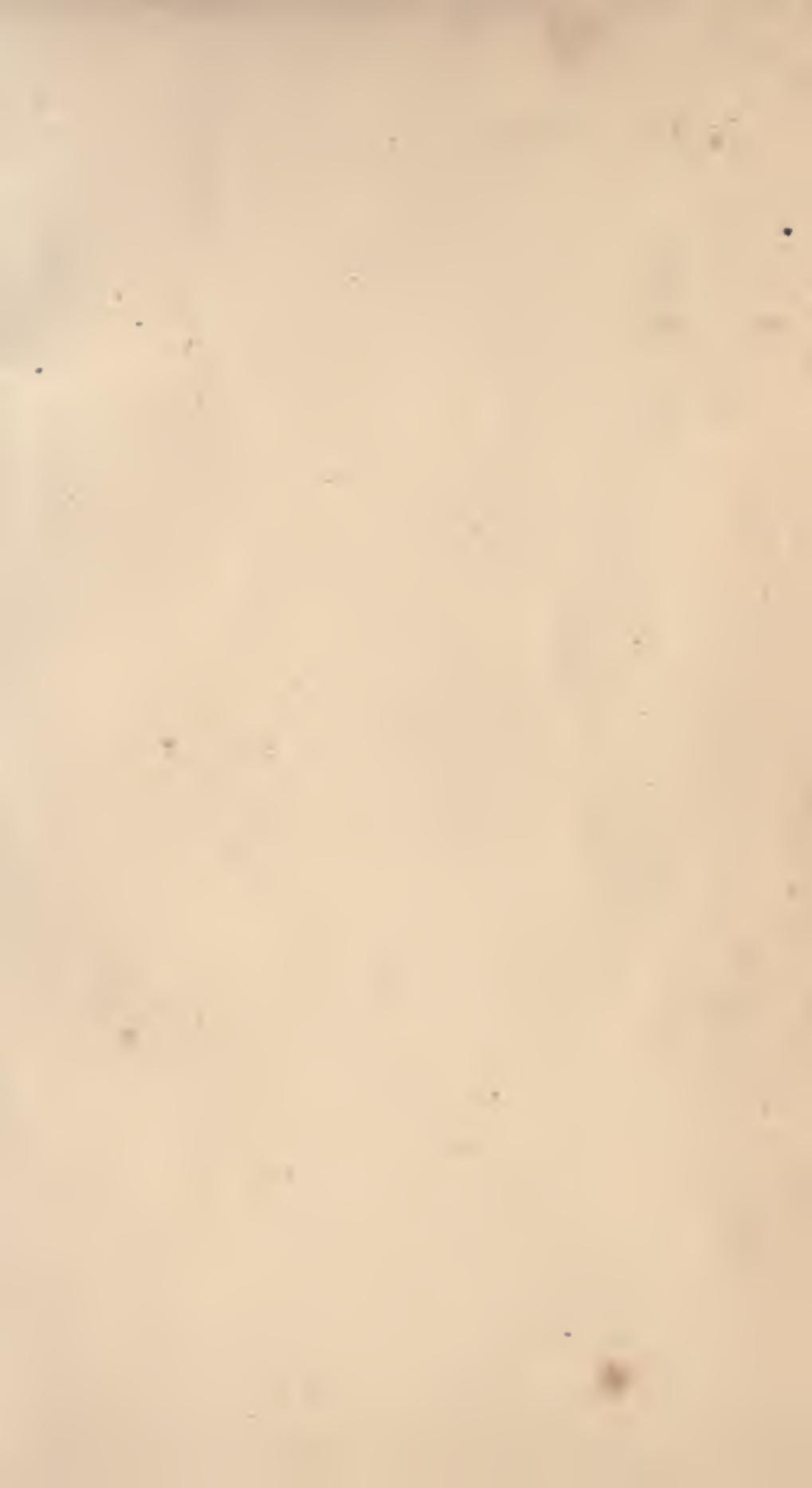




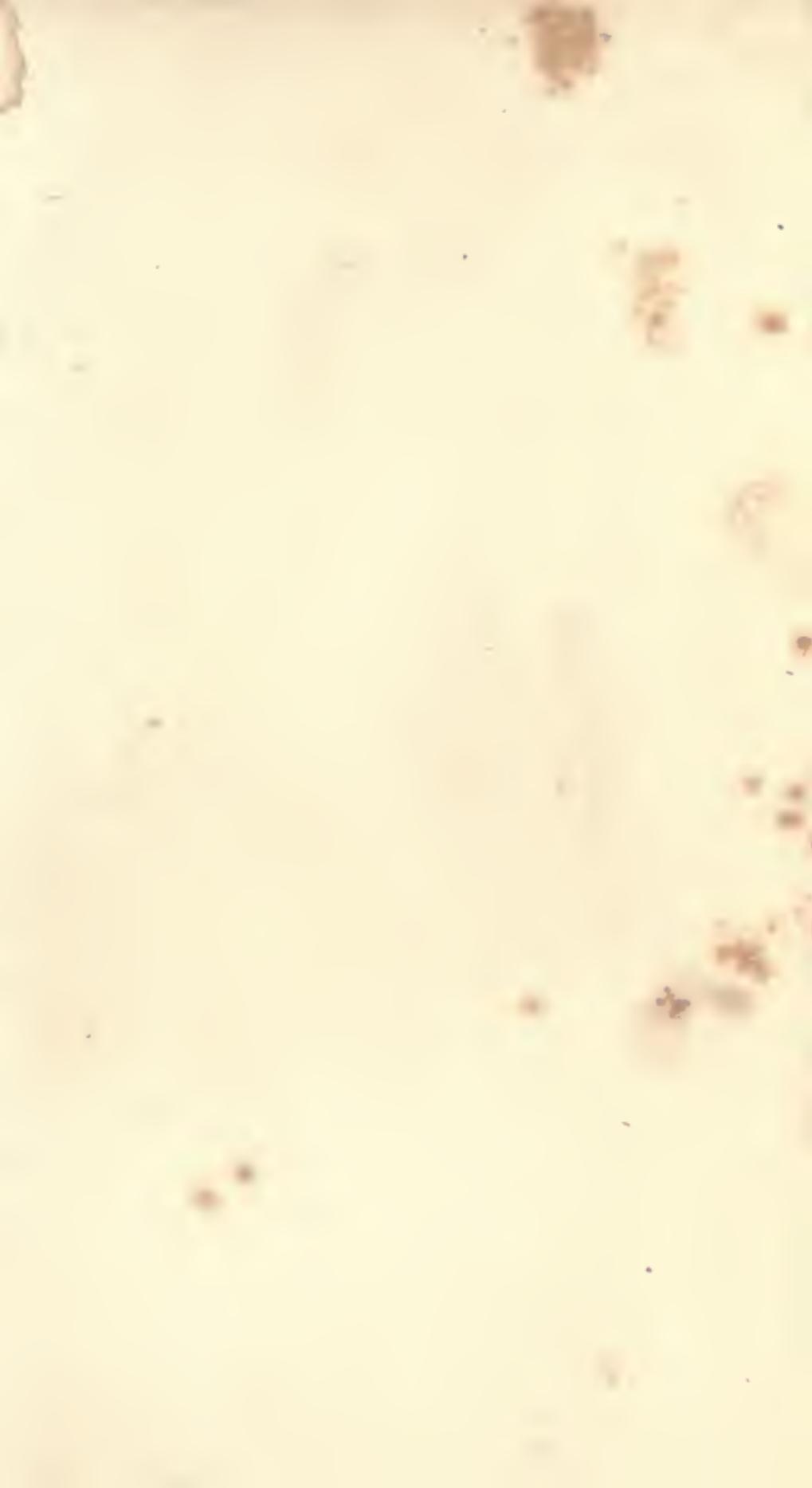
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THE
Cobbler and His Rose.

BY
MRS. E. E. BOYD,

AUTHOR OF "TWO LITTLE YELLOW JACKETS,"
"THE BIG DOTS AND THE LITTLE DOTS,"
"THE P. D. S.," "ONCE UPON A TIME."



PHILADELPHIA:
ALFRED MARTIEN,
1214 CHESTNUT STREET.
1871.

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The Cobbler and His Rose.

CHAPTER I.

JERRY AND ROSE.

VERY one, even those who lived miles away, knew Jerry. He said he never could tell why his mother picked that name for him out of all the other names in the Bible, unless it was that he was such a *very* crying baby, and she thought it the most appropriate. There was one thing, no one but her gave him the

full name, "Jeremiah," so that after all, it was not so doleful, but "rather chirpy."

Every one for miles around knew Jerry, and what is saying still more, every one respected him. The minister, when he was tired studying, and very often could not find a text that suited him for the next Sunday's sermon, went to Jerry's shop, and had a long talk with the old man. Then he was sure to come out with a new light in his eye, and a gladder, quicker step, feeling that he had gained something which would not only be of use to himself, but many others.

He often told Jerry the best part

of the sermon was of *his* getting up, when the cobbler told him what good fare he had set before them.

But the old man never could see how he had any hand in the making of such a great thing as a sermon. If it had been a shoe, he could have challenged the parson or any other man. No matter what hurry people were in, they tried to find time to put their heads in the window, and bid him "a good-day," just to hear his cheery voice and see his good-natured smile.

Ah! but didn't the boys like him! You ought to have seen them on Friday afternoon, when school was dismissed, which it always was sooner

than on other days, "make tracks," as they said, for Jerry's cottage. If they had failed to come, Jerry would have been as much disappointed as they, for that was "reception day," and a good time all around was expected. If a boy for some misconduct was detained longer than the rest on that day, he would gladly have taken a whipping for the sake of being let off, and Jerry never got his sails fully spread, the boys thought, until all were there. The shop was not a very commodious place, but it was astonishing how many boys could crowd into it, and yet leave room for Jerry to draw out his wax-ends.

It was like other shoemaker's shops, strewn over with bits and scraps; a last here, and an awl there, and everything smelling strongly of leather; but the walls were as white as many bedrooms, and on the window-sill, in summer and winter, stood two pots of geranium, and a rose that looked as if it bloomed on purpose to make the old man glad.

Often, when he was stitching away and thinking, his eyes grew moist and so dim that he had to rub them dry with his sleeve; but when he looked at its freshness and bloom, his eyes lit up with a glad light and the smiles played about his wrinkled face. For,

bonny as the plant was, his little blossom, his Rose, was far bonnier, and never could there be sweeter flush than that on her fair cheeks.

He must always have thought of her when his eyes grew moist, and when the smile and the light broke over his face, he still thought of her; but O, they were so different, those thoughts. The first pictured her a little lovely orphan when he was gone, with no one left to call her loving names and give her tender care. The other saw her loved and cherished by Him who cares for every little plant, and watches the unfolding of every blossom. “Why, even the wild-

flowers, little orphans as they are, are just as dear to Him as the rarest flowers in the grand gardens, and *He* cares for them because they are so lonely, and never forgets the colors they ought to wear, or the perfume they ought to give. My Rose, my blossom, will be safe in His keeping, aye, safer than in mine," he added, his voice growing steadier and his heart stronger as he thought. And Rose was as fair a blossom as ever grew. Her sparkling eye, glowing cheek, and merry laugh, were sure to draw forth the exclamation—"How lovely!"

But better than all this, she was

truthful, trusting, obedient and unselfish. She liked to make others happy, and you had only to say something would please you, and it was done at once, if Rose could do it. Then of the two, she seemed the happier, and after all, really was, for the Bible tells us, "It is more blessed to give than receive;" and when we give pleasure to others, our pleasure is two-fold. Something comes into our hearts then, that we never could have without thinking of some one else.

Some people shook their heads when her mother died, and said, "Poor child, what a pity she could

not go too, hers will be a sorry life, now that her poor mother is gone."

But Jerry did not thank them for their wish that his blossom should fade and die. He prayed that she might be spared to gladden and comfort his old age, and that he might have wisdom given him to train her up for heaven. For a great many years Jerry's wife had been dead, and Rose's mother kept house for him. When she left him, he told Rose, who was only four years old, that she was to be the "little wife, and take care of grandfather."

This made her clap her little hands and laugh; but there were many hours when he had to lay aside his work, and sit with her on his knee, trying to divert her thoughts from her mother, by telling her funny stories, and asking her what she was going to give him to eat that day.

Sometimes this had the desired effect, and smiles broke over her mouth while the tears were yet upon her lashes; but many times all this failed, and the old man was at a loss what next to try.

One day a happy thought came to him, and he told her of the babe born in Bethlehem. How, when it came

from heaven, the angels flew down to tell the shepherds to be glad, and how they made such beautiful music when they sang.

Rose lifted up her head, which had been pillow'd on her grandfather's arm, and listened. Then he went on. "The shepherds were so glad to hear the baby had come, that they left their sheep and dear little lambs and went to see it; then they went back and told every one about the dear child. For the good Lord, our Heavenly Father, had sent him out of heaven to make people happy and teach children how to be good."

"What was the baby's name?"

asked Rose, with a little sob, as if the great trouble was ready to break out afresh.

"Jesus," said her grandfather.

"Did Jesus cry, and did his grandfather nurse him?" asked Rose.

"He was very good, and an old grandfather nursed him and loved him better than any one else. But a wicked king wanted to take him away and kill him."

"I hate that man, I won't ask God to make him good," interrupted Rose excitedly, looking into her grandfather's face with eagerness. "Did he get the little baby, the naughty, bad man?"

"No, he did not get him, and the baby grew up to be a man, and little children clapped their hands and sang when they saw him, and he took them in his arms and blessed them."

Rose had never learned to talk baby-talk, but had always had a little womanly way, and she liked to understand things, so she said, "I guess you mean, grandfather, that he kissed the little girls and boys."

"Well, maybe that was it," said the old man, delighted with his success. "But now suppose we get the supper. You set the table, and grandfather will toast some bread, then some other day, if you are good, he will

tell you more about the holy child Jesus."

Jumping from his knee, after having a kiss and a hug, the "little wife" mounted a chair, and handed the dishes down to the old man, with orders not to fix them, only to set them on the table, which orders he laughingly obeyed, and went on with his toasting.

After that, when the little heart was lonely, nothing cheered it so much as to hear about Jesus. She always forgot to cry then; she was so glad he made the blind people to see, and the sick well. Very often her grandfather got her to tell him

about the Saviour, or sometimes when he told her about the kind things Jesus did, he purposely forgot some part, so that she might correct him. And it astonished him to find how much she knew.

Although so young, nothing had such great effect by way of rebuke for misconduct, as to have her grandfather say, "Jesus would not have done that."

"Then *I* won't," was the artless reply, and so the beautiful life of the Saviour was giving greater charm and beauty to the life of the child Rose.

CHAPTER II.

THE STEP-MOTHER AND JIM CROW'S BONNET.

HE minister's wife wanted to take Rose when her mother died, and bring her up with her little daughter Mary; but the idea of parting was so painful to the old man that she did not urge it. Every week, however, and sometimes very often through the week, Rose went to the parsonage to play with Mary, who called her Cousin Rose, and watched with eagerness for her coming.

They were both about the same

age, but Mary was one of those timid natures that must have a stronger to cling to, and she found all she needed in Rose.

Mary *thought* of things, and Rose *did* them, then when Mary wondered and admired, Rose laughed and said, "Just as if every one could not do that, why it is as easy as anything."

Mary thought there never was such a pretty little girl as Rose, with her crimson cheeks and sparkling eyes; but Rose thought the pink and white of Mary's a great deal prettier. Mrs. Lapsley took care that Rose should be dressed neatly and in a becoming way, so that Mary and she very often

had dresses alike, to their great delight.

They were both too young to know that there could be any distinction between a cobbler's grandchild and a minister's daughter, and Mrs. Lapsley had no intention that they should ever feel it. She taught them that no one could be beautiful, no matter how finely they were dressed, unless they had a kind and pleasant manner, and that people were not loved and thought well of so much because they were rich, as because they were good and unselfish. So they grew up together, trying to be good and kind, and although they sometimes

had little quarrels, such as children all have, Rose never felt that she had not as good a right to be treated well as Mary, and Mary never thought of reminding her that she was "only a cobbler's little girl."

"Guess what I saw around the corner?" exclaimed Rose, as she ran breathless to her friend one day after school—"a step-mother!"

"How do you know it was a step-mother?" asked Mary, coolly. "And even if it was, that would be no great thing. You can see plenty of them all the time. I know children who have step-mothers."

"Why, she was sitting on the step,

nursing a baby, and Minnie Hall said she was a step-mother. John Robbins says step-mothers take children by their hair and pull it out, and Minnie says all the mothers who sit on steps are step-mothers."

"I guess they are *step*-mothers, you silly Rose, because they sit on the *steps*. But they are not the kind of ones John Robbins meant, and he tells a story, they *don't* take children by the hair; he ought to be ashamed of himself. I know some step-mothers, and they are real kind, and their children love them as much as we love mamma."

"Then Minnie Hall is bad too, and

I will not go with her any more," said Rose decidedly. "What is a *real* step-mother, Mary?"

"Why, a *real* step-mother is—well suppose mamma was dead, only she isn't, and I never want her to be dead—well *suppose* she was, and papa should marry some other lady, because there wouldn't be any one to buy my clothes, and attend to the servants; well, she would be my step-mother, that is what it means. I think it is very kind for ladies to be little girls' step-mothers when their own mothers die, don't you? Mamma is your step-mother now you know, because you haven't got any other mother, only

you haven't got a father, and she is not married to your grandfather."

"Is that what it means? I wish I had a real step-mother, to live with me all the time."

"She might punish you, you know, and *that* wouldn't be very nice," said Mary with emphasis, not too well pleased with Rose for wanting to have any one beside herself to love.

"O, grandfather wouldn't let her, besides you said they were nice and kind."

"Well, so I did, but they might get angry *sometimes* and give their children a whipping."

Rose did not reply, but all through

their play she thought how nice it would be to have a step-mother. When she went home, after kissing her grandfather she sat down close beside him, for being eight years old, she thought herself too large to sit on his knee, and putting an arm around his neck she said, "I wish I had a step-mother, grandfather. Won't you get me one?"

"What ails the child?" he replied, laughing, and taking off his glasses to wipe them, then putting them on and turning to Rose, who sat waiting for his answer—"A step-mother, what put that in your head little wife? Do you know what a step-mother is?"

Rose told him all that had occurred, and then renewed her plea. "Mary's mother is good, and I love her next to you, grandfather, but she does not live with us, and I want a mother to stay here all the time."

The old man's heart smote him; he was afraid he had done wrong in keeping the child with him, instead of giving her to Mrs. Lapsley, so for fear if he waited longer his courage should fail, he said, "If the little wife went to live with Mary's mother, that would do just as well, wouldn't it?"

"And leave you, grandfather?"

"O well, you could see me every day;" but here he thought he had

better stop, for he was not sure he could keep down the choking feeling.

"Well, I wouldn't leave you for all the world, grandfather, not even for Mary and Mrs. Lapsley. Who would get the supper ready, and wash up the dishes, and keep house for you? Would you like me to leave you, grandfather?"

Old Jerry laid down his work, and drawing her on his knee, he stroked her wavy hair with his hard, toil-worn hands. Then, in a trembling voice, he said: "If the little blossom was taken away, the old tree would soon wither and die, for 'tis that that keeps it green." But in a more cheerful

tone he added, "Nobody will ever think as much of grandfather as his Rose, so *she* must be little wife, step-mother, and everything."

He drew her closer, holding her so tight that he almost took her breath away, she said. Then when he had kissed her rosy lips, he asked, "Is grandfather to have the little wife all to himself, or must there be the step-mother?"

"I guess I'll be all," she said, laughing and jumping from his arms, "and I'll play step-mother to my kitten, and punish it when it is naughty."

Jerry sat watching her in her chase after the kitten, thinking to himself,

"It is human nature the world over. The good Lord puts these feelings in the hearts of the little ones, and nothing that any one can do will take them out. I'm not her mother, that is very clear."

In the meantime Rose had found the kitten, and was preparing to cut out a bonnet and circular, so that she could take it out walking, as mothers did their children. Of course it twisted around and shook its head when the paper rattled about its ears, and then it had its ears boxed, and was told that it might as well sit still at once, for it should *not* disobey its mother.

After repeated efforts on the part of the kitten to get away, and as great on the part of Rose, who was determined it *should* look like *other children*, the paper patterns were cut, and it scampered off, not once looking back, for fear of being recaptured.

"It is a very troublesome child," said Rose, as she laid down the scissors and paper to look among her patches for silk with which to make the bonnet. As it was summer, she could wait a little while for the cape; but it would not do to take it out in the sun without something on its head, its complexion might be spoiled. "It is a very troublesome child indeed,

and will have to get a great many whippings; the idea of its scratching its mother in that shameful way!" Here she held up her little fat hand, on which were several long red marks.

It took a long time to choose between the colors, there were so many pretty pieces. "That green would be sweet," she said; "if I only had Jim Crow here, I could try it on."

But Jim Crow had had enough of millinery for that day, and was playing hide-and-seek all by himself out among the bushes in a neighboring yard.

"There, this is the very thing: I

will make the bonnet of it;" and she drew out a piece of yellow satin, and held it up admiringly. "But there must be something stiff to make it on;" so, after a long search, she found a piece of thick brown paper, such as is used for wrapping round heavy goods, and laying the pattern on it, cut out the bonnet-frame.

Every little while, her grandfather looked up and smiled to see how handy she was, and how like a little woman.

"But she could not help it," he thought, "with such a good teacher as Mrs. Lapsley."

It did not take long to cover the

frame, for Rose seemed to know almost as well where to begin, and how to proceed, as if she had been apprenticed to the millinery business.

"Now I must trim it," she said; and as the trimming was the most important part, that required longer time and more thought. In one corner of her bureau drawer there was a little painted box with a glass lid. It used to be her mother's, and Rose was very careful of it, and kept it in the same place. Now she took it out, and emptying out bits of ribbon, old flowers and feathers, began her selection, laying each one on the bonnet, to get the effect.

"O, it will be too splendid!" she exclaimed, as she threw over the yellow satin a bright scarlet ribbon. "Jim Crow will look elegant." Then a green and black feather, from the tail of the old rooster who had died, was added, and this called for another exclamation of delight. Next, a large pink rose with a yellow centre, was selected, because it was too pretty to leave out, and then the box was laid away, and *then* the trimming commenced.

The feather was made to stand up as straight as possible, so that when Jim Crow shook his head it would wave and nod like the plumes on

a hearse. The pink rose graced the other side; but the crowning glory was the scarlet ribbon. It was so broad that it nearly covered the entire bonnet, and its bows looked like grim sentinels keeping guard over feather and flower.

Suddenly, Rose remembered the inside quilling. "Such a stupid—to make a bonnet without something inside!"

So box and bag were again examined, and an old piece of lace brought out, which looked, judging from the color and width, as if it had been part of her grandmother's cap border in the days when they

were worn nearly a quarter of a yard deep.

Part of this had been torn off, so that it was only about a finger-length wide, and soon it was transferred to the bonnet, where it would not stand out properly as a border should, but kept falling over in a very provoking way. "Well, it will do for a veil," she said, after several fruitless efforts to keep it in place. "Mothers always put veils over their children's faces, when they carry them out."

"Is not that magnificent, grandfather?" and the bonnet was held up before the old man's spectacles,

who declared it almost made him wish he was going to wear it.

"Then you shall," was the quick reply. "There now, you ought to see yourself. O, you are too funny for anything, grandfather," and she laughed so merrily that the old man had to laugh; when just in the midst of the fun, in walked the minister and down dropped the bonnet, which Rose picked up and ran off with.

"Playing school, and having to wear the dunce cap?" asked Mr. Lapsley, with a great deal of fun in his eyes and around his mouth.

"About that, sir," replied Jerry. "These little folks have  great

way of ordering us old ones around, and somehow we take to it very easy. They have a wonderful coaxing way with them, these children." Jerry seemed to think some such explanation necessary, after being caught in such an undignified performance.

But Mr. Lapsley, it is probable, had often gone through the same or a similar performance, for he said with a very significant nod, "I understand."

CHAPTER III.

JERRY'S STORY.

N Friday, after school, Rose nearly always went to the parsonage, because Mrs. Lapsley and her grandfather thought it best, as on that day the boys came to visit the old man. They were always respectful, and never used coarse language, but there was no doubt the society of Mary Lapsley was much more refining.

On Friday, too, Jerry always had an air of importance, or, to say the

least, had great satisfaction. He was pleased to have the boys seek his society, and it always took him back to his own boyhood's days.

"So here you are, all as merry as crickets," he called out, as they came bounding in one day. "Let me see, have I got the whole party?" and his eye ran quickly over the group. Then a shade passed over his good-natured face. The boys saw it, and winked at each other. But one of them, a good-hearted fellow named Amos King, said, "See here, it's a shame, Jerry's not the one to fool. We're all right, Jerry. Come in, Fidler. You see we made it

up, that we would have some sport:" and Fidler walked in, evidently delighted at only being out in the road, instead of detained in the school-room.

"That's the ticket, isn't it Jerry?" asked one of the party as the old smile came back to the cobbler's face at sight of Fidler. "Thought I was getting an extra pill, didn't you?" said he, on entering, and in his heart he was glad his conduct had been good that day, if only for the sake of seeing Jerry so happy. "Were you ever kept in, or flogged, when you were a boy?" asked one.

"I say, tell us about some of your

scrapes, Jerry ; that's the kind of talk I like," said Fidler again. This was hailed with delight by all the rest, who declared it "hunky, jolly," and all the absurd things boys say when they are very much pleased and excited.

"Tell you boys about some of my scrapes ! Well now, I would like to know how you knew I ever got into such things," and the old man gave a quizzical look as he pegged away at his boot.. "Just as if there ever was a fellow in the world who didn't sometimes get into scrapes," and the boys laughed at the thought.

"Well, yes, I fear we won't find

many such," said Jerry. "And I see there is no such thing as cheating you boys, or putting you off either," as he looked around at them, they nodding and winking as if to say, "You're right there, old fellow."

"But where to begin about my scrapes will not be so easy, for I was in mischief ever since I can remember, until—well, until I stopped. When that was, will come in with the story.

"Story!" The boys drew in their breath, eased themselves around so that they could see his face, and in as many different ways as there were different boys, showed their interest.

"Where shall I begin?" asked he.

"Begin when you were born," said George Gordon, "who was readier with his words than with his wits," the boys said.

There was a general roar, and Jerry agreed with him that that was far enough to go back, as his memory was not able to carry him much farther.

"Well, when I was born, I did not weigh near so much as I do now; indeed, I was rather a small specimen of humanity. They hardly thought it worth while to weigh me, so they put me in a quart measure, and I fitted it nicely. It couldn't have been skin-tight, or they would have had

trouble to get me out. But I wasn't 'the little man, no bigger than your thumb, who they put in the quart pot, and bade him drum.'

"Well, as I was saying, I was so small that no one thought I would be of much consequence in the world, and they all agreed that I might as well die before I gave any trouble. But my mother thought if the Lord chose to send her such a wee little body, he meant her to take good care of it, so she had me wrapped up in soft cotton, and kept me as warm as toast—the way they wrap up little young chickens sometimes.

"That seemed to agree with my

constitution, and I began to pick up in the way of flesh until I was quite a respectable baby. In those days people did not grow rich on their children's misfortunes and deformities as they do now, or my parents might have made a good-sized fortune.

"So I kept on growing, and I suppose doing my share of kicking and squealing, until I grew out of babyhood. What I have told you is not from memory, you know, but it is just what I was told when a boy; that is, when I began to get into mischief, and came near losing my life, my mother told me what a hard time she had raising me, and what ingratitude

to God it would be if I bid defiance to Him by taking my life in my own hands in that way."

"What did you do?" asked George, ready as usual.

"Well, the first thing I remember, was putting the cat into a tub of scalding water to wash her; and, as my mother screamed out that I was killing her, and the poor cat's cries were so piteous, I reached forward to take her out, but my hand and arm were so scalded, that in my pain and fright I let go my hold, and fell in altogether."

"O!" exclaimed all the boys, and George was on the point of asking

another question—probably, “Were you killed?”—when Jerry proceeded.

“The Lord meant to spare me though, for my mother was on the spot at the instant, and I was drawn out regularly parboiled. Then, for the second time, they had to put me in cotton, but it was not so agreeable as at first; however, after my mother and all had given me up, I was brought round by God for some wise purpose; though I think, as time went on, the reason was a mystery to my friends.”

“Did the cat die?” asked George.

“Yes, poor thing, she died; she had been in too long before they got

her out, for they were so anxious about me."

Kind-hearted Amos here expressed his sympathy with the cat, in which some of the boys united, while others laughed at the idea of being sorry for a cat.

"The heart that would not be sorry for the sufferings of the meanest thing which God has made, is not human," said Jerry, sharply. "You are right, boys, the more helpless a thing, the more it requires your pity."

"Well?" said Fidler.

"Well, I kept on growing more and more venturesome, until my poor mother's heart was almost broken.

She said she never had a moment's peace when I was out of her sight, and when I was with her, she could do nothing but watch me for fear of my getting into mischief."

"Who would have thought you were such a young lark?" said Fidler, glad that some one else had troubled his parents, and been a young "scape-grace," as he was called.

"I paid dear for it all, though," said Jerry, while the threads were drawn out very slowly, and he spoke as if to himself—"I would give the world, if I had it, just to have my mother back to tell her I was sorry, and ask her forgiveness."

The boys looked at one another, and Fidler seemed uncomfortable. No one questioned him then. Presently he said: "Boys, when your mother is gone, you have lost your best friend. If her commands do not hold you, or her love check your waywardness, then look out, there are dark days in store for you, and rivers of tears will not wash out the memory of the grief you have caused her."

"I never meant to be cruel to my mother. I thought she was too strict, and did not know anything about boys, and that she would see I would come out all right when I became a man. I was out at night, because

all the boys I knew were out, and that was the time for the greatest sport, I thought. My mother knew it, and urged and entreated me to stay in at night, but she did not dare to tell my father, who was very strict about these things, and whose punishments were always severe.

"I was encouraged by this, and so took advantage of my mother's kindness, and went on as before. Many a time she never closed her eyes until midnight, waiting for me to come home, so that she might let me in without my father hearing me.

"I had fallen in with a party of

bad boys, who taught me card-playing and smoking, and who from beer-drinking would have led me on to drink brandy also, had not my father, who was compelled to be out late one night, met me at the door. Finding from my breath that I had been drinking, he accused me of it, and I, after trying to deceive him, told him it was only beer.

“He said no more, but the next day he ordered a quart of beer, and insisted upon me drinking the greater part of it. I did not want it then, but I had to take it, and that was the last drop of beer that ever went into my lips. You see, it came near

taking my life. I always thought he put something in it to sicken me; but however it was, I never want to be sicker than I was that day.

“My mother cried and wrung her hands, saying I would die, and begged my father to let her do something for me; but no, he said he would give me enough of beer, if I liked it.”

“He was an old—heathen; what did he treat your mother that way for?” said Fidler, looking as if he would like to have the old gentleman there to pound.

“His treatment was kind, compared to mine,” replied Jerry; “besides, he whispered something to her

that removed all her fears, and she went out of the room.

"I did very little at school in those days by way of study, but I always had friends among the boys, and in examination they helped me, so that I seemed to keep up with the rest. But I was in disgrace very often, by being kept in for neglected lessons, and gave my teachers a great deal of trouble. One day I was kept in, to work out my examples in arithmetic, and being in a sullen mood, I sat for some time leaning over my desk, with my head in my hands. Growing tired of this, I raised my head and saw, right beside me, on

the adjoining desk, a slate with the very figures that I needed.

"I was very hungry, and tired of being in school so long, here was a good chance to get away; so, quietly drawing the slate over, and putting my own in its place, I rubbed out a figure at a time, then made it over, until in a few minutes the work was done, and I was at liberty.

"I was now free from all but my thoughts, but, do as I would, I could not rid myself of them. I whistled, I sang, I ran, then I walked slow, but all this time something said, 'Jerry Haslin, you are a thief. A boy who would do that, would do

a great deal worse if he only had a chance."

"That afternoon, I thought I would ease my conscience by telling the owner of the slate what I had done, but he only laughed, and called me 'green,' He said I would have been worse than a fool not to have taken the slate; so I thought too, and always after that I helped myself in the same way when I could get an opportunity.

"But I can't tell you the rest to-day; next Friday, if you are all here, I will give you the other chapter. Mind, if there is a boy away, I won't finish."

"Couldn't you tell us just a little more now?" pleaded several voices.

"No, that would spoil the next chapter. See, here comes my little Rose, and that is a sign that it is supper-time. So, home to your mothers, boys, and see how you can keep their eyes and their hearts dancing with happiness all the week."

CHAPTER IV.

JERRY'S “LITTLE WIFE” GOES AWAY.

S the boys passed Rose in the road, Howard Hutchens took off his hat, while the rest only nodded, or made funny speeches.

“I say, look at Hutchens,” said Fidler, quite amused at the gallantry of the latter. “Didn't he do that in style? Practicing for Sunday, you see.”

“What do you mean?” asked Howard, his face flushing as he spoke.

"Nothing, only when Sunday comes, then we see *somebody*, and of course we have to take off our hat to her, so it's all right to try it through the week, it comes easier then."

"You're a big simpleton, Fidler;" but this time Howard looked rather pleased. "My mother says that you should never pass a lady whom you know, or a gentleman either, without bowing."

"Don't every one know that as well as you? But Rose Ralston is not a lady or a gentleman either."

"It is the same thing, she is a little girl, and will be a lady some time. My mother says a true gentleman

will be as polite to a child as to a grown person. And I think it is just as easy to bow, as to say, 'How do you do.'"

In the meantime, Rose, who could not have told whether all the boys or only one boy bowed, had reached the house, and taken her seat by her grandfather's side. That was the place always when she had anything to say.

"O, grandfather! just guess what Mrs. Lapsley says. She is going to take Mary ever so far away in a boat, and in the cars, and she says I may go, if you will let me. Mary says it is the nicest place in the whole

world, and that we won't have anything to do but play."

"Then I think I would go, if it is to be so nice," said her grandfather, smiling at the eager face looking up to his.

"Mary says we can catch fishes, and have as many good things to eat as we want. Mustn't it be splendid, grandfather? Don't you wish we lived there?"

"Splendid! I guess it must be; it makes my mouth water to think of it. I suppose you won't want to come home at all. But as sure as you don't, I'll get another wee wife; for I couldn't get along without some

one to wash the dishes and cook the dinner, you know. So you had better not like the place too well."

"But who will be the mother when I'm away? You won't have anybody to stay with you." Here Rose looked very much as if she had taken leave forever of the old man, and never meant to smile again.

"O, that will be all right. Mother Lober will fix up and be mother for me until you come back. But maybe you didn't mean to come back, but to stay, and not have any work to do."

"Now grandfather, I'll cry if you talk that way; you know I'll *never, never, never* go away to stay from

you. Would you go with Mary if you were a little girl like me?"

"Indeed I would, and have a real funny time of it, so now let us have supper, mother, and then we can talk more about this nice place."

After tea, Mr. and Mrs. Lapsley walked over to see Jerry, and explain all about the visit. It was to an old aunt of Mrs. Lapsley, living eighty miles distant, in a beautiful part of country, among the mountains. They were to be gone four weeks, and Mrs. Lapsley asked the old man whether he could spare Rose for so long a time.

Coming quietly over until she was

quite close beside him, Rose listened eagerly for his reply. She had never been from home a day, except to visit her friend Mary, and now her heart was full of a new joy at thought of the delightful times she was to have.

When her kind grandfather said he could spare her, if she promised not to stay too long, and that he would sing, whistle, and stitch away harder than ever, to keep himself and the kitten company, her joy would not stay in her heart only, but beamed from her eyes, and made her hands clap together, until she seemed almost beside herself with gladness.

Then, as too much joy cheats little

folks out of their sweet refreshing sleep, and makes them dull, instead of bright and cheerful in the morning, Rose went to bed. As she kissed her grandfather and Mrs. Lapsley, she looked timidly at the minister. He had often patted her on the head, and called her Moss Rose, but had never kissed her. But to night, he had prayed for her, and asked God to make her always in character as beautiful, and in heart as fresh, as the flower whose name she bore.

Rose knew what that meant, for her grandfather had often told her about good and lovely people, so going up to the kind minister, who





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smiled and held out his hand to her, she raised her blushing face for a kiss.

Nothing could have pleased Mr. Lapsley more, and drawing her to him, he put his arm around her and kissed her. He held her close to him and laying his hand on her shoulder, said: "What will Rose have to thank her Heavenly Father for, to night?"

"For my grandfather," she replied quickly, looking over with a bright smile to the old man, who had laid down his work out of compliment to Mrs. Lapsley.

"And what else?"

"For kind friends,"—part of the

prayer her grandfather had taught her. As she said this, her looks showed who were meant by kind friends, and the minister and his wife smiled.

"Is there nothing else?"

"I will thank Him that I am going to such a beautiful place with Mary.

"And that is all, is it?" He was going to speak, but Rose suddenly cried out, "O no, sir, there is something better than all that. I thank Him for his love to me, that He sent the Saviour Jesus to die for me. I know a little hymn, shall I say it?"

Mr. Lapsley assented, and slowly, but with earnestness, she repeated:

"I'm a little pilgrim
On my heavenward way;
Jesus walks beside me.
For fear that I should stray.

"When I have a sorrow,
Or when I feel a fear,
He puts His arms around me,
And whispers, 'I am near.'

"So, I'll draw up closer,
And let Him take my hand;
And safe through the journey,
He'll bring me to that land.

"Then I'll sit beside Him,
And look into His face;
And O, how I'll love Him
For His redeeming grace!"

"And a sweet little hymn it is," he said, kissing her again; "but it is time the little pilgrim was on her way to bed."

"It is no wonder you are so fond of the child," he remarked, as she skipped away to her little room. Jerry made no reply, but a mist came over his spectacles, and he wiped them with his sleeve.

After a few minutes, Mr. and Mrs. Lapsley went home, having settled that the old man was to give up his housekeeper the next week.

And O, how the time did fly! Before he could think almost, they were gone, and he left in charge of the

kitten. For that had been a special charge, he must be sure to give it its saucer of milk, and see that it was put in bed.

"And what about Jim Crow's going out? Where is his bonnet? for I suppose he must be carried out as usual," said Jerry, after she had given her orders.

How Rose laughed at the idea of her grandfather carrying Jim Crow out. "O, it is too funny! how I wish you would take him before I go; I want to see how you look:" all the time laughing her merry little laugh as she spoke. But Jerry was not going to take any charge of the kitten

until she went, so all she could do was to repeat her orders about the care he was to take of it.

“ You will just have to let Jim Crow run about the yard, grandfather, for I am going to take his bonnet for Mary’s doll; she says when people go visiting they take their best clothes, and her doll’s bonnet is not as nice as the kitten’s.”

“ Very well,” said grandfather, and so, after any number of hugs and kisses, the stage drove up in which were Mrs. Lapsley and Mary. Rose’s little trunk was put in it, and then she was lifted up; the driver said, “Get up, Tom,” as he cracked his

whip over the horses' heads, and although only Tom had been invited to go on, the whip set both in motion, and the stage was off.

Jerry stood at the gate, nodding and smiling, while Rose threw kisses at him, and called out, "good-by," as far as she could see him, then he went slowly back to his work. Something said, "Suppose anything should happen, and you would never see Rose again." It brought the tears to his eyes, for they did not want much coaxing, they were quite ready to start. But the next minute he said aloud, "I'm not going to take her out of God's hands in that way, think-

ing about accidents and all them kind of things. I couldn't do as well by her as He will do, and He can keep the cars from going off the track, or the boat from sinking, just as easy as I can mend a shoe."

Then going into his little bed-room, he thanked God for the great treasure he had in his grandchild, and asked Him to keep that treasure for him, and to make him more worthy of the gift. "Keep her young heart," he added, "and may my blossom come back as sweet and fresh as when she went away, to gladden once more my dim old eyes."

After that, he whistled and sang,

stitched faster, and took care of Jim Crow as he had promised, thinking constantly of Rose, and fancying her at her plays, but no thought or fear of evil came to him.

Now Rose would have laughed herself if she had seen how faithfully he attended her kitten; several times a day he had to get up and look round for it for fear it would wander off in search of its mistress and be lost. But if he had known, he might have saved himself all that trouble, for Jim Crow was in the full enjoyment of his freedom; scampering through the grass, running after shadows, darting in and out through fences, and having

a good time pretending he was a squirrel and climbing the trees.

He got such a great dinner and supper the first day, that it made him sick; and after that, although Jerry worried and wondered what had come over the kitten, and really nursed it one or two nights before putting it to bed, Jim Crow would never consent to eat so much again. You would not catch him eating so much dinner that he would have to lie still all afternoon; he liked fun too well for all that; so no coaxing could make him take more than his saucer of milk.

Jerry felt that a great responsibility

rested on him, for if anything happened to Jim Crow, he did not know what he should do, so he called the attention of Mother Lober to the ailing one, as he supposed, and she gave it a little catnip tea, as Jim Crow only sniffed at the leaves and would not touch them, and a hard time they had to get him to take that.

First, Jerry spread out his leather apron and set him on it, then he opened his mouth while Mother Lober poured the tea in. Jim scratched and shook his head, and shut his white little teeth; but there was no help for him, the spoon was thrust between them, and the nasty stuff poured

down. Didn't he run when it was over? His little heart beat like the blacksmith's hammer, and he had half a mind not to venture in the house that night for fear of another dose. It was a great deal worse than having a bonnet tried on, or even being dressed in flowers and feathers, and that was bad enough.

But Jerry was satisfied; Mother Lober said that was what he needed, and it did seem to the old man that the tonic had been of use. At any rate Jim Crow was let alone, to his great joy.

CHAPTER V.

WHICH IS JERRY'S "OTHER CHAPTER."

JN THEY came with a rush, all the boys but Fidler. "We are not fooling you this time," they exclaimed; "he has just gone and had himself kept in. We told him how it would be, that you said you wouldn't tell us unless every one was here, and he said *he* would be all right. It's a real shame to cheat the rest of us. Look here, Jerry, won't you go on with it? we ought to have a reward for being good fellows."

"That's so," said Jerry, looking kindly at them as they gathered around him. "But haven't you got a reward already? Haven't you a more manly feeling than if you had been deserving of punishment? I'll venture to say, that poor fellow in school has not your bright eyes, or your happiness of heart. No, no, boys, the consciousness of doing right or wrong is our greatest reward or punishment. If we are true to our better nature, a chord is touched that gives out music, that makes glad and uplifts the soul; but if we play false, there is a jarring and discord within, that brings only dissatisfaction and

regret. So, you see, you are already paid for your good conduct."

"But don't you mean to tell us after all?" they asked, in tones of disappointment.

"O yes, you must have the story, you deserve it, and a much better one. But do you think now you could enjoy it as well as if he were here? I am afraid I couldn't give it to you right, if I missed one pair of eyes."

He watched all their faces as he said this, but no one spoke. With all his faults, they liked Fidler, and did really want him to hear it as well as they; but it was so hard to wait

another week, when they would have heard it to-day only for him.

"Suppose now, as my little house-keeper is gone, and there is no one here but me and Jim Crow, you ask your mothers to let you come around after supper time, and bring Fidler along; how would that do?"

"That is the ticket—good for you, Jerry," and similar expressions, gave the old man to understand that his plan met with their approval.

When they had gone he began to think about Fidler. "Just such another," he said. He is getting further and further out to sea, and if something is not done soon, will be dashed

to pieces among the breakers. He is headstrong, that is it, and with all the ropes they may put around him to draw him straight, he *will* pull in the other direction and have his own way. If it could be mine to help him ; to get the tangle out of him ; for he seems like a tangled thread, that the more you try to undo, gets the more knotted. But it is knot at a time, and snarl after snarl, until all is smooth and straight. If I could find the right end, God could give me the patience and the understanding. But how I talk ; can't He show me the right end too."

So remembering his own boyhood, he went again into his little room and

there talked to God. But this time it was not about Rose.

When he came out, he said: "I'll try it, it must have been put into my heart, and if He put it there, He will surely bring good out of it." Then he and Jim Crow had their supper; after that he began to watch for the boys.

Fidler was with them this time, but he had not much to say, and Jerry very wisely did not notice him in particular.

"Now for the other chapter, boys," he said when all were seated. Fidler had gotten into a corner, and taken up Jim Crow, which Jerry had for-

gotten to put to bed, in his anxiety about the boy.

"Well, I left off, let me see—where was it?"

"When you went to school, and played cheat," spoke up George Gordon.

"Just so. Well I would like to stop there, for the rest is not very pleasant to look back upon, but I must keep my promise. I copied my sums whenever I could get a chance, and idled away my time until at last the teachers were so vexed with my conduct, they sent me home. And what was a great deal worse to me, they sent a note to my father, for

some of the boys had told them my mother could do nothing with me. Then I got a terrible flogging, and was told I should go back the next day and ask pardon for my misconduct. I made no reply to this, for every stroke seemed to harden my heart still more. But I said to myself—"You will see if I do any such thing.

"That night I went to bed early, with a heart full of evil passions. I would be revenged on my father, and he should not control me any longer. My mother came up, looking as if she had passed through some great sickness. O, I wish I did not always

see her face when I think of that night! She came over to my bed, and stooping down, kissed me, calling me her boy, and telling me how she prayed that God would help me to subdue my evil nature, and be a comfort to her now in her middle age.

"How she talked to me and cried, but I did not shed a tear. She knelt down by my side before leaving the room, and prayed a prayer that went right up to heaven, and God answered it in His great goodness, but she did not see the answer. I don't know how I did it, but when she left the room, I got up, and rolling together

a few clothes, I crept down stairs, and went out from the care and protection of my parents. I walked miles until I came to the country, and there I got work at weeding gardens and doing little things about. But that did not satisfy me, and as I had read glowing accounts of a sailor's life, I thought if I could only get on board a vessel I would be all right.

"After working here and there, and making inquiry, I fell in with a boy, who, like myself, was dissatisfied with home and parental restraint. So we agreed to go to sea together. We had to hide through the day time, and travel at night, until we were almost

starved, for the boy's parents were in hot pursuit of him; but he had taken some money from home, so that we bought a little to eat, and often bribed other boys with a trifle, to keep them from telling of our hiding-place, or to have them put us on the right road. At last we found a vessel bound for the West Indies, and without asking any questions, we entered upon a sailor's life.

"For a day or so, we thought we were most fortunate, having little to do, and congratulated ourselves that our troubles were all over. But soon the sailors, and even the captain, began to show their true colors, and

we were cuffed and knocked about like dogs, because we were slow in obeying orders.

“Sometimes I was ordered to climb the mast when I was scarcely able to crawl from sea-sickness. Indeed I was sick all the voyage. But although I expected every minute to fall headlong into the sea, there was no help for me, go I must. Then I was beaten unmercifully by the sailors because I would not drink their grog. I do believe if they had killed me I would rather have died than take it, after what I had suffered from beer-drinking. But the Lord cared for me, though I did not think of Him,

and at last we reached the island of Cuba and landed at Havana. I meant to leave the vessel there, thinking it would be very easy to make my escape, but the long sea-sickness, cruel treatment, and now the intolerable heat of the place, took away my courage and what little strength I had. By the time we were ready to sail, however, I was stronger, but so well watched, that I thought best not to make the attempt to run away. I resolved, however, that that should be my last voyage.

"And so it was. 'A life on the ocean wave' was not what I had pictured it, and disgusted with the

ship, and all on board, I made my escape as soon as ever we landed. I did not dare to go home for fear of my father, but by this time I would have given anything for a sight of my mother's face, or to have had her kiss me, as she did on that last night. I could not go about in my sailor's clothes for fear of being sent back, so I exchanged with a pawnbroker for an old suit.

"I knew that I must get work or starve, yet something kept me about the town. I thought perhaps I might get a glimpse of my mother. Just as I had despaired of this, and made up my mind to leave and try the country

again, I met a school-mate. When I saw him I attempted to run, but he overtook me and would make me tell him where I had been. Then he looked so strangely that I got frightened. I was sure something had happened at home. I was afraid to ask him though.

"He asked me if I was going home, and I said, No, I was afraid of my father. But he told me he did not think my father would be angry now—and he stopped and looked queer. I felt as if I would choke, but I said, Why won't he, Sam?

"Then he told me that my mother

made him promise, before she died, that he would forgive me, and that she forgave me, and left a letter for me, for she said she knew I would be back again.

"O boys, I hope none of you will ever suffer as I did that day. I felt like Cain when he had murdered his brother Abel, and it seemed as if every one must know I was a murderer.

"What will you do?" asked Sam, looking very sorry.

"I don't know, I said. O, I wish I was dead, Sam, I have killed my poor dear mother, and then I began to cry, and Sam cried too. He had

pulled me away into a corner, so that the passers-by did not notice us.

"Go home, Jerry, you had better," he said. "I am awful sorry for you." Then when I told him I couldn't, he asked me to go to his house. But I was afraid to go there, thinking I might meet my father, and now I could not bear to have him see such a bad, wicked boy. I thought he must hate me, even though he had promised my dear mother to forgive me.

"No," I said, "I will go away where no one knows me, and try to be a better boy."

"Shall I tell my mother I saw

you?" he asked. "She is good like your mother, Jerry, and will pray for you. That will help to make you better."

"So I told him he might, and promised to write and tell him how I was getting along. He had some pocket-money, which he gave me, then we shook hands and separated. There is not much more, or there is more than I can tell you now. I got work with a man who farmed in summer, and made shoes in winter, and that was how I learned my trade.

"Then I thought I must see my father, and have his forgiveness, so I wrote to Sam that I thought of

coming home again. But he said my father had left the place, never expecting to find me. He had left my mother's letter though, with the old minister, so that if I did ever go back, as my mother said, I could get it.

"I was not long in going for the letter, and that letter, dear boys, was more to me than millions of dollars. Through God's grace, it made me the man I am, and while it caused me to shed bitter, bitter tears, my heart was ever afterwards soft. For it gave me such a knowledge of my mother's love for me her wayward boy, and then showed me how

much greater my Heavenly Father's was, that I could not help feeling my ingratitude and resolving that I would try to live as God and my sainted mother would have me live.

"I never once heard of my father, though I tried every way to gain some intelligence of him. That is all, boys, it has been a sad story; I hope none of you will ever have such a sad one to tell."

All the time Jerry had been speaking, there had not been a word spoken by the boys, but the drops that fell on cheeks and hands showed they had not listened unmoved. Jim Crow might have thought he was

caught in an April shower, from the way his soft fur was sprinkled over with Fidler's tears; but Jim Crow was fast asleep, dreaming of climbing trees, or playing with the shadows, perhaps. You see, Fidler was in a corner and could cry without being seen. But I question whether the boys would have seen him if he had been sitting in the centre of the room. Each one found enough to do, thinking of himself, and of the awful sorrow Jerry must have felt when he broke his mother's heart by his bad conduct.

They were still quiet as they got up to go home; even George Gordon had no questions to ask. As Fidler

passed Jerry, the old man whispered,
“Come around by yourself to-morrow,
I want to show you her letter.”

He nodded assent, brushed through
the group who stood at the door, and
went home alone.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT ROSE DID AT AUNT BETSY'S.

AT LAST the day came for Jerry to have back his blossom, his darling Rose. And although he knew she could not be there until afternoon, he was up earlier than usual, fixing the house, and seeing that everything was in order. It never got out of order, Mother Lober said, though she always talked of "putting it to rights."

He tried to sing, whistle, and sew, as usual, but the music always grew

slow, and then his sewing was slow, until at last he thought he might as well take a holiday. So, what did he do, but dress himself in his Sunday clothes, shut up the house, after telling a neighbor where he was going, and walk down the road with a brisk step to meet the stage.

"Won't she be surprised to see grandfather?" he thought. "My, but my old eyes will be glad to get a sight of her sweet face." So he walked on for a long distance, shading his eyes with his hand, and peering down the road to see if there was any sign of the stage. Sometimes he was sure he saw it, and straight-

ened his face, and tried to look proper, and after all it was only a wagon.

"I don't know what to make of it," he would say, after each disappointment. "Surely nothing could have happened to it."

Finally he began to be tired, for he was not accustomed to long walks, and concluded he had better turn back. It must certainly be along soon, so he would walk slowly, and it would overtake him.

But although he walked slowly, and turned back many times to look, he found he was within sight of home, and yet it had not appeared.

"If I didn't know she was away, I would surely think that was the child," he said, stopping and leaning forward to get a better view of the figure standing by the gate. Just then she spied him, and throwing poor Jim Crow out of her arms, Rose flew down the road like a bird on the wing, with delighted cries of, "Here he is! O dear, dear grandfather!" Then springing up, she clung to his neck so that the poor old soul could not straighten himself to look at her.

O, but he was glad! and O, but she was glad! and so the two, the old heart and the young, were happy,

as hand in hand they went toward the little cottage.

"You see, grandfather, there was a great rain, and the flood washed away a bridge, and so we could not come home the way we went. I was frightened when I saw the place all shut up, for I was sure you were dead; but Mrs. Conrad told me you had gone to meet me. I wanted to go after you, but she said you would soon be back, and then I meant to jump out and frighten you."

It was very late before supper was eaten that evening, for grandfather had to tell all about Jim Crow, and

what *he* did every day of the four weeks.

When he told about the catnip tea, Rose declared that neither he nor Mother Lober knew anything about kittens. Why, he never drinks more than a saucer of milk for his dinner, grandfather, you know he is only a baby-cat now, and they can't eat like other cats."

"Sure enough," said her grandfather, "we might have known that. But he looks pretty well, doesn't he?"

"He looks just splendid;" here she gave him a loving squeeze, which Jim did not appear to relish. "There was

a cat up there, black like Jim Crow, but it was a hateful thing, it scratched every one who went near it."

Here her grandfather had to interpose and say it was bed-time, the next day she could tell all about the cat and everything else. So, when he had knelt down and thanked God for bringing his darling home safe, they kissed each other, said good-night, and went to bed.

Rose was awake very early the next morning, although not any earlier than she had been in the habit of getting up when away. She listened, there was no stir in the next room; so, dressing very quietly, she said

her prayers, and went down stairs. She knew her grandfather must be tired after his long walk, and did not want to disturb him.

But she had not been down long when the old man made his appearance, feeling as bright as a lark, he said: "And now I must see this little face by daylight," he added, drawing her to him, and kissing her. "Why, the roses out in the garden will have to hang down their heads when you are about."

When they sat at breakfast, he seemed almost too happy to eat, but kept watching her with the greatest delight, as in her childish way, she

rattled on from one thing to another, now asking a question, now having something wonderful to tell.

Breakfast over, they knelt down as usual to pray for God's kind care over them, and then, when the little duties were performed, such as Rose had to do, her grandfather told her he could not be patient any longer, but must hear about that wonderful place.

"But you must not work hard when I am telling you, or you won't know what I say, and it is going to be splendid. So Jerry agreed not to work too hard, and Rose commenced.

"Well, we went in the stage, you know, and when I couldn't see you any more, I wanted to get out and come back, but Mrs. Lapsley said you would not like it. So we went on, and the roads were so rough that Mary and I tumbled into each other's laps, and we had splendid fun. Then we went on the boat, and that was the nicest part of all. The water was covered with little white sail-boats, and we saw fish jumping up and looking out of the water, but when they saw us, they put their heads in again. O, I can't tell you how much we saw; and it was so nice and cool that it blew my hat

off, and it came pretty near being drowned."

"Did it go overboard?" asked Jerry.

"No, sir, but it might, you know. Wouldn't I have looked funny without a hat, grandfather?"

Her grandfather suggested that she might have worn Jim Crow's, and then they both had a good laugh about it.

"Well then, after we got out of the boat, we got into the cars, and they went so fast that I had headache when I tried to look at the fields. So Mrs. Lapsley told Mary and I we had better go to sleep, and we did.

I guess we would have slept all day if she hadn't wakened us. Then when we left the cars, there was a carriage waiting for us, and that took us to Aunt Betsy's.

"O, but she is a nice Aunt Betsy, grandfather! She kissed me the same as Mary, and called me her child. If she was a step-mother she would never whip her children or pull their hair. She has a great big house, grandfather. O, it is ever so much larger than this—it is like a castle Mary says, such as kings and queens used to live in. And she has an old father like you, grandfather, only his hair is curly, just as if it was put

up in papers. Mary says it curls itself. I mean to put yours up; you don't know how nice you will look with curls.

"Where was I?—O, yes! Well, the house was so big that I was afraid to go about by myself; why, you could be lost just as easy as anything in it; but Mary said she could run all about and never be the least afraid. We had a little room all to ourselves, and it had two little beds in. Mary slept with me in mine one night, and I slept with her the next night, because Aunt Betsy said we should do as we pleased.

"But there was a great big garret-room, grandfather, that you could get lost in, and nobody ever find you, unless they were as smart as Mary. We used to play, 'Hot, buttered, blue beans,' and Mary got so tired sitting all squeezed up, that she had to peep out and let me see her. For I never should have found her if she hadn't. It had great big closets that were so dark we called them caverns, but we didn't play much in them, we only peeped and ran away. There was one splendid one though, with shelves all around, that we had for a house, and we put real chairs in it, and called it our parlor. Mary had her doll

there, and Aunt Betsy let me have a beautiful one to play with, because I was careful, she said. She said it used to be her sister's, who was dead, and I was the only little girl who ever played with it since. Wasn't she kind, grandfather? But how fast you are working! did you hear about the doll?"

"You don't suppose I would miss that part," said he, shaking his head. "But how would it do to have a doll of our own? That Jim Crow is growing too big a child to nurse, besides he is very unmannerly, he thinks nothing of lifting his paw and giving your cheek a slap."

At this Rose went into a perfect ecstasy of delight, and was only brought out of it by her grandfather telling her she hadn't finished with the play-house.

"Did I tell you about the stove?" she asked, opening her eyes very wide and raising her voice. "Well, only to think, we had a *real* stove, but it was not for grown people, only for children. It had pots and pans that you could cook in, and we made dinners and suppers up there, and invited Aunt Betsy and Mrs. Lapsley. Aunt Betsy says we are splendid cooks. Mary said she would be the one to taste the things, so that they

would be all right, and when they wanted sugar or salt, I put it in. Then she had to taste again, for fear there was too much, she said. We had to work very hard to fix up the room, before we invited them to dinner, because nobody used it, and it was so full of things. We put on old dresses, and swept it all over, then we put carpet on the floor and set the things all straight, and Aunt Betsy sent a great big table up, just on purpose for us.

"Aunt Betsy and Mrs. Lapsley had their bonnets and shawls on, just as if they were going to see grown people, and they never laughed at our dinner

once. The chicken got scorched, because Mary was so busy tasting the pudding, that she forgot it; but they said it would happen sometimes with the best of cooks.

"They didn't eat much though; I guess they thought it wouldn't be polite, but we didn't have much left, for I was awful hungry. They talked to us as if we were big people like themselves, and said we had a very fine house and a very good child. For Mary's doll was sitting at the table you know, in a little high chair.

"Then they invited us to take tea with them, and we had it out in the garden, in the arbor all covered over

with honeysuckle and roses. We took the doll too, and she wore Jim Crow's fine hat and looked splendid; and we dressed ourselves like fine ladies.

"Aunt Betsy invited a little boy who lived near her, to come and play with us, but Mary said his mother spoiled him, and we did not like him. We used to run and hide in the garret when we saw him coming, and you know he never could find us there, so he had to go home, but it made him angry. He upset our dishes, and tossed up all the room. One day when he couldn't find us, he caught Mary's doll by the feet,

and was going to dash its brains out, but Mary was peeping, and she jumped out so quick, that he was awfully frightened, and ran down stairs as fast as he could.

"He did not come back for a good while, and then we told him we would not play with such a rude, disagreeable boy."

Here Jerry asked if it would not have been well to try and help him to be good, instead of sending him off; but Rose insisted that he never could do any better, he was "too spoiled for anything."

"That is not the way Jesus does," said he. "Jesus is very patient with

wayward children, and does not send them away because they do some wrong things. He is only sorry, and tries to help them to be good."

"I forgot that, grandfather; I guess playing so much made me forget it; but if I ever go there again I will be kind to him;" and a kiss after this, made Grandfather Jerry's face bright as ever.

But that was not all that Rose saw, or these were not all the delightful times she had. When Mr. Lapsley went to take them home, he took her out riding on horseback, and he rode beside her. She was not a bit afraid, she said, when

he led the horse, for it went so nice and slow, but after awhile he let go of the bridle, and when her horse saw his start off, *he* ran too; so Rose just put her arms around old Snow's neck, and held on tightly until the old horse seemed as much frightened as she.

"He wasn't as well used to little girls hugging him as I am, was he?" asked Jerry, laughing at the funny picture. Then Mr. Lapsley stopped his horse, and told Snow to stop, and Rose never would go horse-back riding again. But what was a greater wonder than all, they caught real fish, and had them for dinner,

and they tasted just like the fish that were bought, only ever so much better."

In a little while Mary came over, and then Jerry heard the story over again, with some things that Rose had forgotten to tell him, so that it was almost as good as if he had been there and seen all himself, he said.

That night, true to her promise, Rose put his hair in curl-papers, and as there was not much of it, the little there was, seemed determined to have its own way, and stood out as straight as it chose. But Rose was determined not to give up, so, by dint

of screwing and twisting, until poor Jerry felt as if he was being scalped, she succeeded in making him look as much like a hedgehog as possible. With every paper, she would inquire if it hurt him, and encourage him by saying that it would soon be done, which Jerry secretly rejoiced to hear. Now, he might have refused to put himself under this torturing process, but then what were a few twinges of pain to him, compared with the great pleasure it gave to his darling Rose?

On Saturday night he had to beg off, and make shaving an excuse, or he would have astonished good min-

ister Lapsley and the whole congregation by his queer little curls. For Rose had set her heart upon having him go to church looking "as sweet as Aunt Betsy's father."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SKEIN UNRAVELLED.

ON Sunday, who should join them as they were walking to church, but Fidler, dressed carefully and looking very much pleased with the old man's warm greeting, and the artless expressions of Rose.

As they took a seat in God's house, the old man bent his head and poured forth a flood of gratitude. Whose, but the Lord's hand, had led that boy there; and had not he a right

to praise Him? He felt that he never could praise enough.

As they walked home, Fidler said, "Do you think the people in heaven know what we are doing down here, Jerry?"

"Why shouldn't they?" was the reply. "They surely have not less knowledge than they had on earth." He mused for a little while, then continued, "But the Bible says there is no sorrow in heaven, so I suppose the ministering angels, whom God sends down on errands of mercy, fly back with *joyful* tidings to the rest. Maybe they only take the *sorrowful* part to the ear of God Himself."

"If that is so," thought Fidler, "our little Clara don't hear much good news about me. Wouldn't she be glad though, if I were a better boy?" And with the thought came the desire to make some one happy by trying to do right.

This was not the first time these thoughts had come to him. Ever since he had read the letter, his life had been coming up before him, as it now was, and as it ought to be. He saw that if it ever was to be made right, *now* was the time to begin.

So he told Jerry, though he would not have breathed it to any one else,

that on the day *he* finished the story, he had resolved to run away from home, because he thought no one cared for him, and that everything was against him.

"That is the very way I used to feel," said the old man. "And whenever a boy gets to that point, he had better look sharp, he is in great danger of being run off the track entirely. Why, bless your heart, boy, you would have to do a great many outbreaking things before your mother would be able to give you up. But suppose you begin to think a little about her now, and see if that don't bring you round all right."

Why, if we did half as much for our fathers and mothers as they do for us, they would have so much joy in their old hearts that sorrow couldn't begin to get a corner there."

Jerry was so much encouraged by Fidler going to church, that he proposed to the boys, as they did not go to Sunday-school, that they might step in and spend a little while with him on Sunday.

They never refused his invitations, and now they thought this would be a good opportunity to pass away time, for to boys who do not go to Sunday-school, the day is generally long and tiresome.

Now, some of the neighbors were very much perplexed as to what all this could mean; it was very strange that such a good old man should have a party of ungodly boys there on Sunday; it might be well enough on other days, but this certainly did not look well. They were afraid the old man's mind was growing weak, and that the boys were imposing on him.

But Jerry's mind was quite clear on this point. He knew how much the boys thought of him, and how attentively they listened to what he said, so, while he liked to please them, he meant to try and profit them at the same time.

At first there were Bible stories, and these Jerry introduced in such a charming manner, that the boys were led to ask questions, and finally this led to Bible lessons, so that Jerry really had a Sunday-school, and a most attentive class.

Nothing pleased them more than to have a long lesson, for then Rose was sure to get home from her school before they left, and to take part in the lesson with them. Why, the Bible seemed like a picture-book when she and Jerry talked about it, and they made everything appear as if it were before them.

There was a great difference in the

taste of the boys. Some of them preferred the old Testament stories, where the kings and their armies went out to battle, and where there were such glorious victories. But Jerry never let them lose sight of the fact, that success always attended those who put their trust in God. That it was not numbers, but the Almighty Arm that gained for them their victories, and that even a handful, through His help, were more powerful than a great army unaided.

Others liked the New Testament, where every page spoke of the love which made glad and happy the lives with which it come in contact.

Among those of the latter, was Fidler. Now he and the rest had often read the New Testament when they went to school, but the Saviour's life never appeared then as it did now, and he almost thought he could see Him, as never thinking of himself He went about foot-sore and weary, yet always having some word of cheer for the distressed, or being ready to perform some kind act.

It puzzled Fidler to know how He could always think of the happiness of others, when he had so few comforts Himself. But Jerry made that all plain, by showing him that He came not to do His own will, but

the will of His Father in heaven, and that the divine nature always had the ascendency over the human.

"That was a good name for him, wasn't it?" said Fidler, when they read, 'And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,' for he did wonderful things."

Then the boys gave their opinion as to which was the most wonderful. Amos King thought the raising of the dead was; and Fidler, His walking on the water and taking Peter with Him.

One of them turned to Rose, and

asked which she thought the greatest wonder.

"Why, I think the greatest wonder was that Jesus should be willing to come down here and suffer so much for us, when we are so ungrateful and have so little love for Him."

Her grandfather nodded approvingly. "Yes, when He could do *that*, He could do anything. Every day when I think about it, it seems more wonderful that He has been so patient with me all these years, and all the time has been holding out a crown of glory to encourage me. When Jesus can save me, there is nothing at which my faith can stagger."

"Why," they all exclaimed, "you are a Christian, Jerry, the Lord don't have to be patient with you!"

"I would never have been a Christian if it had not been for the grace of God through Jesus Christ, boys, and the same grace is needed to *keep* me one. I couldn't even for one minute do without having my heart washed from its impurity."

"But you can't be every minute thinking about it, or you would not be able to do any shoemaking," said George Gordon, with surprise at this speech.

"No, surely not," replied Jerry, "but when my heart is all given

up to Him, He thinks of it for me, and keeps the blood applied which washes whiter than snow. It is a wonderful thing truly, children, and when you find out about it, as I pray you may, *you* will think it wonderful too."

One day Fidler said to him, "There is one thing, Jerry, which I never could make out: how you could be so cheerful, after what happened when you were a boy."

"I understand," the old man replied. "I thought then I must carry a sorrowful face about with me all my days. But then I began to reason that as I had brought sadness and

gloom to two lives, it should be my business ever after to make others glad and happy. And the Bible says, 'By reason of a cheerful countenance the heart is made glad.' Besides, when God's love is within, it can't be concealed, but *will* shine out in the gladness of the face."

As proof of his business to make happy, Jerry announced his intention of going into the city one day, along with a neighbor. He often went for leather, and Rose thought of course that was what he was going for then. In the afternoon, when she returned from her friend Mary's, where she had gone after school, she found her

grandfather at home, looking, if anything, happier than ever.

As she tripped about the room, telling him of what had happened since morning, he kept watching her now and then, but pretending to be very busy at work.

At last he felt like Mary when they played, "Hot buttered blue beans" at Aunt Betsy's, he could not wait any longer, so he said, "Here, little wife, hand over my pocket-handkerchief, there it lies, on the table yonder."

"Is this it, all spread out?" she asked, and lifting it up, gave a scream of delight, then, with mouth and eyes wide open, stood looking.

"What is the matter?" asked her grandfather, trying to look surprised.

"O, grandfather, you know very well! Did you buy it yourself? I don't see how you could get such a splendid, *splendid* doll. And its eyes open and shut! O! it is the sweetest thing, and you are the sweetest old man that ever lived!"

"What about Jim Crow now?" asked he.

"O, Jim Crow is spoiled, and I can't do anything with him. Now he may just do what he pleases when I have the doll."

So Jim Crow obtained his freedom, and the doll was adopted in his stead.

Fidler came over often, to talk to Jerry, when the boys were not along, for he had—what every one must have whose heart is not changed—a hard time in leading a new life.

But no matter what struggle he had, Jerry always seemed to understand him, and was ready to help him. But he warned him not to depend upon *him*, nor upon his own efforts in such a great matter. “If the evil is not taken out of the heart, we need not try to keep the outward life smooth, for, like Vesuvius, it will surely break forth,” he said.

So Jerry, knot after knot, and snarl after snarl, unravelled the tangled

skein, until it came out fair and smooth. So he was made a blessing to these boys, and in return had great joy as he thought of these words of Holy Writ:—"Let him know that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

CHAPTER VIII.

KEEPING THE TOLLGATE.

FIME rolled on, and Rose was on the verge of womanhood. Jerry's thin locks were now of snowy whiteness, and his still cheery voice had lost its roundness, being more tremulous and broken; but still his heart kept young and fresh.

No day passed without seeing him seated on his bench at work, but it was more toil now than formerly, and the customers had to wait much longer for their work, so that, re-

luctantly, one after another was compelled to go elsewhere.

Rose had grown very thoughtful during the last few years, knowing that in a very little time her grandfather would have to lay aside his work, and then would need comforts such as their means would not allow.

The village school was very good in its way; the teachers earnest in the discharge of their duties; but they only claimed to teach the ordinary branches of a common school education, and not such as would fit their pupils in turn to impart instruction.

Now all her life, ever since Rose had played school with her friend Mary and Jim Crow, she had meant to be a teacher, and had given her grandfather to understand that just as soon as she began to teach he should "play gentleman," and never put another stitch in. At this the old man had laughed, and told her she would need to succeed better with her scholars than she did with Jim Crow; while she, also laughing, assured him that there was a great difference between cats and children.

"I don't know," he said, shaking his head; "one can be about as perverse as the other."

If she could only go away to school for a little while, Rose thought, she would study so hard that she would soon be fitted to pass an examination, and then she knew she could get a school somewhere. But here was her grandfather growing more feeble each day; how could she leave him?

Then, to make it all the harder, Mary Lapsley was going to B—, only twenty-five miles distant, and Aunt Betsy, when she heard of Rose's wish to teach, had offered to send her along with her niece. A great many tears fell those days, and the old cobbler's Rose had a very dejected

air; but it was only when out of his sight that she gave way to her grief and disappointment. When with him, no one could ever have supposed she had a care about anything, or was other than the Rose of years ago.

It is not to be supposed that Rose was alone in her thoughts of the future; day after day, as the old man sat there, came up thoughts as to the prospect of his darling after he was gone, or after he was no longer able to work. Then he chided himself for giving such thoughts a place in his heart. "As if He who watches over the unfolding of the bud will withhold His tender care

from the blossom," he said. "No, no, old heart, this is no time to mistrust now; for you and for her the Lord will surely provide."

Rose had learned these lessons from her grandfather, and not from him alone. The Holy Spirit had been imprinting on her heart, for many years, precious truths; but young hearts are not so apt to look away from their own efforts as the old, so that Rose could not quite understand how they could possibly live when her grandfather could no longer work, unless she was the support.

Mary was about as much disappointed as Rose when the latter

could not accept Aunt Betsy's kind offer; but her father and mother were sure that under existing circumstances she could not do otherwise than remain at home. But they sat themselves to work to devise a plan by which Jerry and Rose could be helped.

"There is nothing he can do, and now the question is, what employment is Rose fitted for?" said Mrs. Lapsley. "She might sew, perhaps, for I have been teaching her along with Mary; but she is so young, and without any one older to direct her, I am afraid her work would not give satisfaction to strangers."

"I think I see a little light in the

midst of this fog," said her husband. "Just now it occurs to me that Mrs. Benson, who keeps the tollgate, is going West to live with her son James. Now how would that employment suit the old man?"

"The very thing," was the reply; "see about it at once."

And now Jerry's faith and trust were rewarded, for He who gave Mr. Lapsley the thought, and is so interested in even what we call the little things in our lives, so controlled circumstances and furthered plans, that in a few weeks Jerry and Rose were in the little white-washed house at the tollgate.

"My! child, but He is a wonderful helper, this God of ours, isn't He?" said the old man, as he sat down at the window to rest, after the fatigue of moving.

"He has been good to us, grandfather, any how," was the reply. "But every one is kind, you know. It was Mr. Lapsley who got us this house, and then to think of the boys—wasn't it good of them helping to move? Fidler said he was not the least bit tired."

"Yes, that is the way the Lord works. He plans and gets others to execute, so that they may be helped and blessed in return. For while

they have made us comfortable and happy, I'll warrant not one of them has a sad heart to-night, although poor Fidler may have aching bones. That boy has the right spirit in him, child, and the Lord will give him plenty of work to do for Him."

"If it hadn't been for you, grandfather, he says he would have been lost, for he was growing hardened."

"I was only the mouth-piece, child; the word and the power came from above," and the old man looked reverently up.

"You won't work any more now, grandfather?" she said, the day after their moving.

"Not much," he replied, "only between whiles, you know."

"But I don't see why you need work at all; we will have enough to support us, won't we?"

"Aye, aye, the Lord has made good provision for us, child; but you see idleness is not becoming in one of my years."

"O, one would think you were a young man, grandfather," she said, laughing, and giving him a loving embrace. "But I don't like to see you work so hard. I want you to be like Aunt Betsy's father."

"What, curls and all?" he asked, with a quizzical look. "You don't

mean to screw my gray hairs up in the unmerciful way you once did?"

"If you don't work hard, I won't; but—well, I won't promise what I shall do if you disobey me," and the merry creature ran away to have everything in perfect order when Mr. and Mrs. Lapsley came in the afternoon.

"Any toll to pay?" asked that gentleman, as he and his wife stepped inside of the door.

"Yours is all paid up long ago," was the reply of Jerry, as, with a beaming face, he greeted his visitors. "That is, I am deep in debt to *you*, sir, but, like everything else, I leave

the payment to Him whose are the silver, and the gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."

"And no better paymaster do I want, my friend," said Mr. Lapsley, "though I feel already fully repaid by the comfortable appearance of your home. "Why, I declare you look as cheery, and everything seems as fresh, as if you and Rose here were bride and groom, and had just commenced housekeeping."

"We love each other just as well, don't we, grandfather?" asked Rose, laying her white hand on the old man's shoulder. He drew her down and kissed her, saying, "Aye, just

as well, my dear, for no love comes between, does it?"

"None but God's, grandfather."

Then Rose took Mrs. Lapsley to show her the house.

"Be sure you take her all over it," said her grandfather, as they ascended the stairs leading to the only two rooms above.

"Grandfather is very happy," said Rose, as they sat down in her little box of a room; "he seems to have grown younger in the last week."

"And what about Rose?" asked Mrs. Lapsley.

"O," and her sweet face flushed, "I am very glad and very content.

I have grandfather and *you*, dear Mrs. Lapsley, and I don't worry about the future now, for I know that God takes care of every day He gives us."

"That has been the secret of your grandfather's happiness for years," said her friend, "and it can never fail to give joy to know that every moment of our life God is making all things work together for our good, and that so special is His care that even the very hairs of our head are all numbered. But I had a letter from Mary,—you may read it now, if you wish; you see she says she will write to you as soon as you can spare time to read a letter."

As Rose opened the letter with eagerness, and read, Mrs. Lapsley watched her attentively. Now there was a smile and a merry laugh as she went over the account of Mary's exploits, or read the comic description of her room-mate; then her face was shaded, and a tear stole down her cheek as Mary told how she longed for her friend Rose, and how happy they might both be together.

As she slowly folded the letter and handed it back, Mrs. Lapsley said, "Well, what about Rose now? is she 'very glad and very content'?"

"O yes, ma'am, I am just as glad and content as before. I only thought

how nice it would have been if I could have gone to the Seminary."

"I understand it all, my dear," was the reply, as Mrs. Lapsley kissed the blushing girl's cheek; "and the dear Heavenly Father knows all about it. He is not losing sight of you, my child, in that you are not able to gratify your wish, but He needs you to help Him take care of His faithful old servant, your grandfather, and He smiles upon your loving and cheerful devotion. Isn't that great reward?"

Then Mrs. Laplsey made a proposal to Rose that she should send her sewing-machine over to her house,

and that Rose could do her sewing for her.

"I am not strong," she said, "and I miss Mary very much in that respect, so I will cut and baste it, and you will not have any trouble, while it will save me a great deal of labor; besides, it will give you change for many little things you need, now that you are growing up."

This was delightful news to Rose, and she hastened to impart it to her grandfather. But when they entered, Mr. Lapsley exclaimed, "My dear, I have found a very valuable assistant in my parochial work: our friend here requests me to give him a bundle of

tracts so that he may distribute them to the passers by. Isn't that encouraging?"

"Indeed it is," said his wife, "and there is no doubt but that good will be accomplished by it; it was a very happy thought of our old friend. You mean to hand them to the people as they pay toll, I suppose."

"Yes ma'am, I thought a word or a tract, or both, would not surely go wrong, and I would like to scatter some good seed, even if I do not live to see the harvest, or the springing up of the seed. It appears wonderful to me at times that when there are so many young and vigorous

workers, the Lord notices such as I, to give me work."

"He has need of all, or rather, He chooses to employ all, so that each one may feel their individual responsibility," was the reply of Mr. Lapsley, "and if He would confer any special honor, it must certainly be upon those who have borne the burden and heat of the day."

The next day Jerry received his package of tracts, and in a few days the sewing machine made its appearance, and quite a bundle of work for the poor of the parish.

So the new home brought new work, and with it came new joy.

There were many times when on coming in from having received toll, Jerry's face shone so that he seemed almost transfigured, and then Rose knew that he had been speaking of Jesus, for no other name could bring such light to the fading eye, or such illumination to the rugged wrinkled face.

The boys still came as before, on Sunday, and many times through the week Fidler dropped in. But he never was allowed to take the toll, because there was something more to be done, the old man said.

"I know, give them a tract—I can do it," was the willing boy's reply.

"More than that," said Jerry; "ask them if they love Jesus, and tell them that He loves them; can you do that?"

"Not like you—I wish I could," was the response.

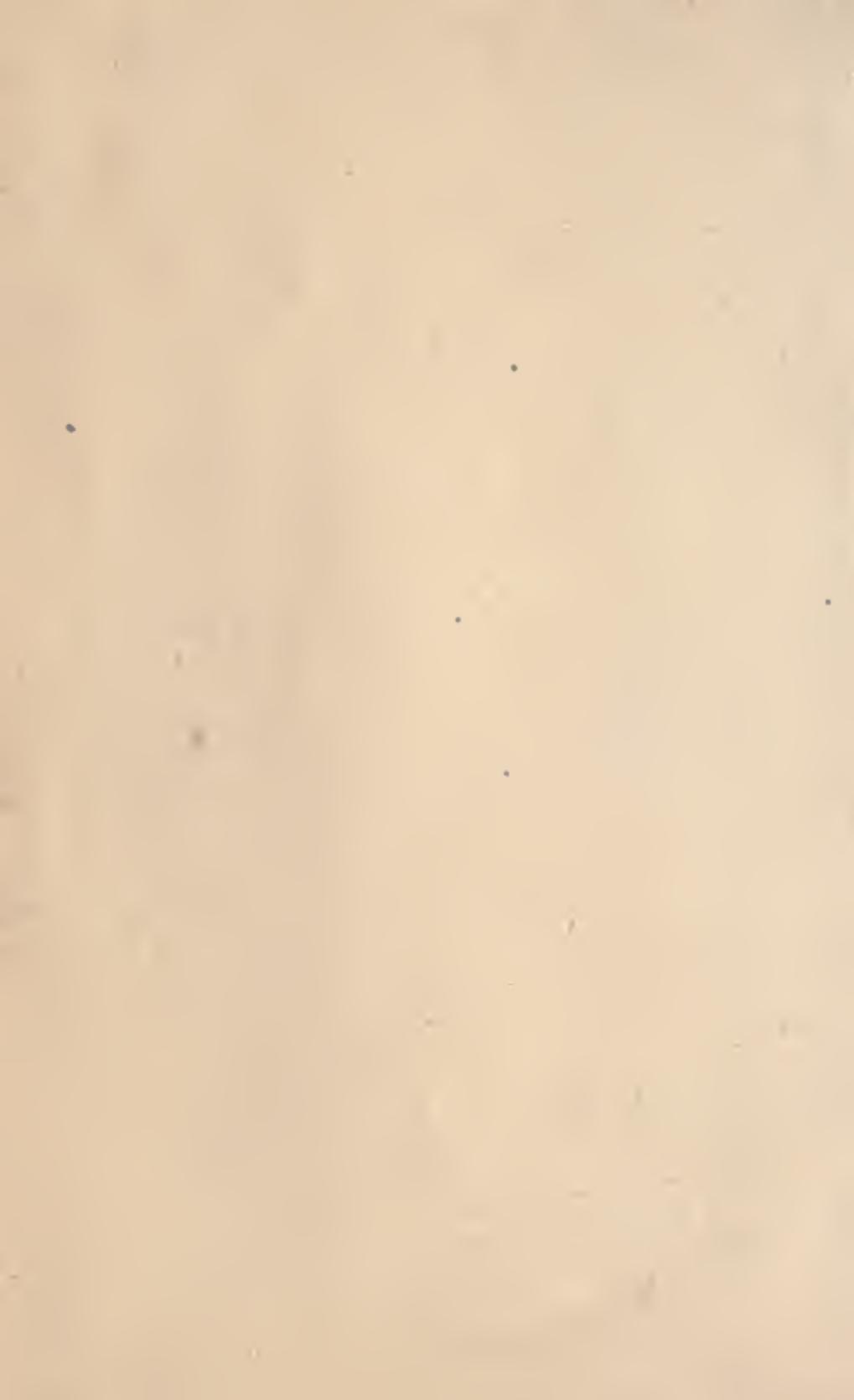
"Just try it," said Jerry. "You will never open your mouth to speak of Jesus, without finding words put into it; and then, when you have spoken them, and asked the Lord to bless your effort, you have done your part, the Holy Spirit will do the rest."

When Jerry became too old to leave his chair, Rose took up his work, and many a careless man and gay thoughtless woman heard from her

lips, as if from those of an angel, the words of Jesus to a fallen world. "It was very easy," she said, when people asked how she could be so courageous, "for she loved Him best, and of course, wanted to speak of Him most."

So the old heart and the young were of one spirit, and had but one life-work.

THE END.



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